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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT EUR/PGI FOR POMAINVILLE AND EUR/NB FOR GERMANO  
COPENHAGEN FOR DANDO

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [KPAO](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: Minister of Education and Science Pledges Support in Signin  
Science and Technology Agreement

REF(s):

- [1A](#). VILNIUS 58
- [1B](#). VILNIUS 57
- [1C](#). 2004 VILNIUS 1548
- [1D](#). 2004 VILNIUS 1546

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - NOT FOR INTERNET

Summary

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1.(SBU) Ambassador Mull met with Minister of Education and Science Remigijus Motuzas on January 25th to further U.S.-Lithuania cooperati in science and educational exchange. The Minister pledged support fo resolving the last obstacle to resigning the Science and Technology Agreement--the refund of Value-added Taxes on USG-funded programs. While the Minister is clearly still adapting to his move from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he did promise continued support for promoting the Fulbright program, encouraging U.S.-Lithuania teacher-training cooperation through U.S. NGOs (APPLE), and sustaining Holocaust education reform. The Ambassador met with Minister Motuzas as part of his tour of Lithuania's new cabinet (reftels). End Summary

S&T Agreement a Priority for the U.S., and the Lithuanians

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2.(SBU) The Ambassador focused discussion on the renewal of the S&T Agreement which has been stalled given the resistance of the Ministry of Finance to establish a VAT refund mechanism. The Minister support the Ambassador's statements about the importance of the Agreement and promised to personally raise the issue with the Minister of Finance t following week. In the Minister's words, the VAT refund mechanism should not be a major obstacle to resigning the Agreement. The Ambassador followed up by noting the great collaboration between the National Academy of Sciences and the Lithuanian Science Council in innovation policy and promoting changes that will allow Lithuanian researchers and businesses to effectively work together.

Fulbright, Study in the U.S., and Educational Cooperation

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3.(U) The Ambassador also used the meeting to raise the Minister's understanding of the breadth of U.S. educational cooperation with Lithuania and seek support in promoting Fulbright. As the principal exchange program, the Ambassador sought the Ministry's assistance in advertising the Fulbright program and identifying the best Lithuanian candidates. He further reminded that the U.S. offers great opportunities in undergraduate education and that the Embassy plans t carryout information sessions in Klaipeda and other cities for interested students this year. The Ambassador also pointed out the APPLE program, where for the 15th year approximately 60 American schoolteachers and educational specialists will travel to Lithuania t provide trainings for several hundred Lithuanian teachers.

4.(U) The Minister voiced appreciation for the Embassy's efforts and his assistant noted the special importance of the GLOBE environmental education program that Lithuania joined in 2002. As the 100th countr to sign an agreement with the U.S. on GLOBE, Lithuania has linked mor than a dozen of its schools to an educational network in the U.S. and internationally that makes scientific measurements, exchanges information, and shares experience in curriculum development. The ES Hub in Copenhagen supported the program's expansion in Lithuania.

Holocaust Education

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5.(U) Ambassador Mull applauded the Ministry's efforts at Holocaust education reform over the past several years, in particular drafting textbooks that cover the Holocaust in detail. The Minister noted his work experience as Director of the Department of Minorities and the significance of Holocaust education. He further informed that the Ministry will increase its responsibility for Holocaust education curriculum development with the dissolution of the Foundation for Education Change (a non-profit organization funded by Soros).

Comment: Closing the Gap on the S&T Agreement

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6.(SBU) In returning to the Ministry of Education and Science after a

10-year break, Minister Motuzas stated his desire to carry over the great working relationship the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has with the U.S. Embassy. The first real test of this new relationship will be his ability to troubleshoot the S&T Agreement VAT obstacle with the Ministry of Finance. Given his stated commitments and support for the S&T Agreement from the Lithuanian Science Council and other government institutions, we are confident that progress will continue. End Comment.

MULL